

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING
ROOM 113
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2001
12 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Kathy Campbell, Chair
Bob Workman, Vice Chair
Larry Hudkins
Bernie Heier
Ray Stevens

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney
Ann Taylor, County Clerk's Office

The Staff Meeting was called to order at 12:09 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM

1 TIGER BEETLE TASK FORCE REPORT - Ann Harrell, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor; Mike DeKalb, Planning Department

Mike DeKalb, Planning Department distributed the following documents:

- News release, dated December 17, 2001, regarding the recommendations from the Task Force on the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (Exhibit A)
- Letter to Mayor Wesely from the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, dated December 14, 2001, indicating that a decision has not been made regarding a potential Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing action for the Tiger Beetle (Exhibit B)
- Membership listing for the Task Force on the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle (Exhibit C)

DeKalb also reviewed *Salt Creek Tiger Beetle Cabinet Report Update, Final Draft of Preliminary Findings* (Exhibit D), noting the following recommendations:

Short Term Recommendations

1. Brief the County Board of Commissioners on the process, findings, and recommendations of this Cabinet

2. Determine measures that could be taken immediately to enhance and maintain existing saline wetlands, and which would reduce the potential for disastrous impacts to areas where the largest Tiger Beetle populations are found.
3. Authorize or solicit funding for research regarding a) the characterization of the hydrology/hydrogeology of the habitat area, b) determination of impacts of basin-wide land use changes and human activities on the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle and saline wetlands, c) Tiger Beetle biology and habitat characterization, and 3) the economic impacts of the management effort.
4. Forward a recommendation to remove the Tiger Beetle habitat (saline wetlands) and buffer zones from Tier I and II of the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan until baseline research can be accomplished.
5. Initiate an on-going formal partnership between the City and other entities to address the protection of the Tiger Beetle and saline wetlands.
6. Prioritize the acquisition of land in the Salt Creek watershed to enhance protection of Tiger Beetle habitat.
7. Explore grant opportunities for wetlands preservation and enhancement.
8. Coordinate planning for protection of the Tiger Beetle and saline wetlands with the Mayor's Floodplain Task Force.
9. Centralize or coordinate the permit process for development and construction within City and County departments, so a more effective assessment could be made of plans to expand development into areas which may negatively impact Tiger Beetle habitat.

Long Term Recommendations

1. Develop a Management Plan for the Salt Creek Watershed and Tiger Beetle habitat by December, 2002.
2. Pursue an integrated, interagency, ecosystem approach to obtaining needed research information about the Tiger Beetle life history, and habitat requirements.
3. Identify and assist landowners with existing programs available to preserve wetlands on private property, and transition lands around the wetlands.
4. Investigate incentives for landowners in regard to voluntary purchases, easements, etc.
5. Initiate a cooperative public education effort that would raise awareness of the Tiger Beetle and its unique habitat, and encourage the public to maintain an interest in the area.
6. Include the area of concern in the Comprehensive Plan in regard to land use, stormwater volume inputs, and direction of growth.

DeKalb said Mayor Wesely has proposed that a 500 foot buffer be established, by policy, around the Tiger Beetle's primary habitat (saline wetlands). He noted that saline wetlands within the Rock Creek Basin fall within the County's jurisdiction and said the Mayor will likely ask the County Board to support this approach.

In response to a question from Hudkins, DeKalb said the buffer will extend from the edge of the designated saline wetlands.

Hudkins noted that the Farm Service Agency currently shares costs for the area 200 feet back from a stream bank.

Heier asked whether there are other alternatives.

Ann Harrell, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, said the 500 foot buffer is midpoint of the range that was suggested.

DeKalb added that the buffer is an interim solution and may be tightened or expanded, as appropriate. He said the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be advised of the proposal of a 500 foot buffer.

Harrell noted that the Mayor will continue to call upon the expertise of the Task Force on the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle.

In response to a question from Hudkins, DeKalb said the buffer basically targeted development and was not intended to impact normal farming operations. He said experts have noted that use of pesticides or sediment runoff could impact the habitat and said this area has been targeted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop best management farming practices to protect the habitat.

Campbell suggested that Board members review the material and that further discussion be scheduled in January, 2002. She also recommended that the Task Force on the Salt Creek Tiger Beetle sponsor an open house on the issue and be available to disseminate information and answer questions.

NOTE: The following maps were referred to in the discussion:

- *Saline Wetlands - Outside City Limits (12-14-01) with 500 Foot Buffer*
- *Salt Creek Tiger Beetle Watershed Protection Zone II Analysis*
- *Future Land Use: Lancaster County and Adjacent Environs*

2 ACREAGE POLICY UNDER THE UPDATED LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - Kathleen Sellman, Planning Director; Mike DeKalb, Planning Department ; Eleanor Francke and Merle Jahde, Comprehensive Plan Committee and Acreage Subcommittee

Mike DeKalb, Planning Department, addressed the following issues that relate to the Lincoln City-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan and acreages (Exhibit E):

- Information sources
- Outreach and public information process
- Briefings
- Response to County Board requests

DeKalb also distributed copies of *Community Regulations for Agriculture Districts* (Exhibit F).

Merle Jahde, Comprehensive Plan Committee and Acreage Subcommittee, reported that the Acreage Subcommittee has agreed on eight items, but said an agreement has not been reached on the density issue.

Heier said he would be willing to give the committee additional time, if needed.

Eleanor Francke, Comprehensive Plan Committee and Acreage Subcommittee, said she is concerned that the Planning Department has recommended that most of the proposals that are now on the board be turned down.

DeKalb said the Planning Department did not say they should be turned down, rather indicated whether the proposals were consistent with adopted policies.

Francke suggested that consideration be given to the impact on economic activity and whether the direction that is being taken is too restrictive. She added "It's bound up in the idea that we want contiguous development and that we want to maintain a compact city."

Hudkins said "I want to know what was being discussed and what those alternatives were because I too have the sense that we're being overly restrictive." He noted that the Board had requested the Planning Department, in a letter dated September 21, 2001, bring back proposed language for the Board to review allowing commercial and industrial uses in the Agricultural (AG) Zoning District by Special Permit. He asked whether this language was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Committee for review and input.

DeKalb said the Comprehensive Plan Committee has discussed industrial and commercial use in the City and County. He said a written response has been provided to the Board, with sample language and what is typical in the Midwest, but said there hasn't been time to follow up on Commissioner Hudkins request to research other jurisdictions for options.

Campbell said the Economic Development Task Force looked at the "broad areas" in terms major economic impact and location along transportation corridors. She said the County Board's question seems to be more of a land use regulation issue.

DeKalb said the current Comprehensive Plan encourages commercial and industrial growth to be directed to the small towns and said the towns have indicated that they would like this to continue. He added that a change of zone is an additional option and said a list of criteria is provided in the 1987 Change of Zone Policy.

Francke suggested that the list of criteria, in addition to Geographic Information System (GIS) information, might be useful in determining future land uses in the County.

Workman noted that he recently met with a group of Little Salt Basin landowners and said they supported having an analysis done of acreages' cost to the community.

DeKalb reported that the National Farmland Trust has sponsored a number of studies that have concluded that residential use does not pay its way.

Hudkins said studies have validity, but said "you've got to know what they are studying and the assumptions that they've made to be able to ascertain what they tell".

Jahde said the committee supports a county-wide survey on land uses to better understand their economic impact.

Francke remarked that such a study may create more divisiveness.

Campbell said a study would be helpful in terms of planning for infrastructure and services.

MOTION: Workman moved to proceed with the study.

The motion died for a lack of a second.

Campbell suggested that the Board allow the Acreage Subcommittee to complete its tasks and to bring forth its recommendations.

Sellman distributed *Lancaster County's Agricultural Economy: Summary Overview Prepared by the City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department for the Year 2025 Comprehensive Plan Economic Futures Review Process, November 2001* (Exhibit G).

NOTE: The Planning Department displayed the following maps:

- *Acreage Development Policy (Work in Progress)*
- *Future Land Use: Lancaster County and Adjacent Environs*
- *Draft Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) - Revised November 2, 2001*
- *Lancaster County's Land Use Plan Including Adopted Generalized Plans of Cities and Villages*
- *Future Road Improvements in County, Lincoln City/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*
- *Wetlands & Grasslands, Rural Water Districts, Root Zone Availability, Paved Roads, Threatened & Endangered, Salinity Hazard Zone*
- *Commercial and Industrial Development Policy (Work in Progress)*

3 ADJOURNMENT

By direction of the Chair, the meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk